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AMERICAN PRESENCE

- According to best estimates, there are currently about 1,400 Americans in Libya. This figure represents a decline of about 600 in the past one to two weeks. A large majority of Americans in Libya are with the oil companies. Most oil company dependents have previously left Libya; there are probably not more than 300-400 dependents remaining (rough estimate only). The oil companies have small technical and managerial staffs in Tripoli, which possibly total 200-300 people. At any given time, there are probably another 100 Americans in Tripoli, including businessmen, teachers and professors, and transients (including journalists). Roughly 50% of all Americans in Libya are located in the Tripoli area.

- The majority of oil company employees are located at widely scattered exploration, production, refining and production sites, primarily in the desert. We presume, but are not certain, that most if not all Americans have been withdrawn from the ESSO facilities at Marsa Brega. There are a few (exact number unknown) Americans working on private contracts with the Libyan National Oil Company, the Brega Marketing Company, and the Arabian Gulf Exploration Company (all Libyan Government organizations) in Benghazi and Tobruq.

- There is another small American community in Benghazi, consisting of businessmen and teachers, which probably does not number more than about 50-75 persons.

- Exit visas are needed to leave Libya. Possible that first indication of withdrawal will cause Qadhafi to slow down issuance of visas. Denial of exit visas would make de facto hostages of Americans.

Quadaffi is likely to react to any public pressure as challenge more likely to precipitate than deter action. Thus any communication designed to deter his assassination campaign should be private and should include as much specific information as possible on our knowledge of his plans, people working on operational plans.

Unless Qadhafi is overthrown, overt military or economic action is likely to intensify his terrorist activities. It will probably increase Soviet military presence in Libya directly and by surrogates. All this could result in strengthening the regime rather than weakening it.

A private communication and withdrawal of Americans is about as far as is possible to go without bringing into play these long repercussions which could strengthen Qadhafi's position and weaken ours. In the event of a terrorist attack after warning, economic and military reaction may be appropriate and necessary but are likely to be largely symbolic in their impact. A very serious and well funded political action operation aimed at overthrowing Qadhafi from within is a more effective response.

Another consideration -- some attack on U.S. officer is statistically likely over the next few months. We may not be able to unequivocally identify it as Libyan inspired. In these circumstances, military reprisals might be difficult to justify.

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SOVIET RESPONSE TO U.S. ARMED ATTACK

- Would certainly respond politically but are unlikely to precipitate military confrontation.
- Will want to do something to maintain credibility with other proxies and friends elsewhere in Middle East--Syria, Yemens.
- Reaction likely depend on scenario. If, in response to assassination of high U.S. official, likely not to do anything. If in response to hit a U.S. installation or seizing of hostages, strong reaction becomes more likely.
- Good chance that Soviets would step in as they did in Egypt in 1970 to provide air defense system with Soviet personnel (Egypt 15,000 Soviets).
- Would give Soviets an opportunity to move in and develop overt military relations with Libyans on a basis which could be justified as defensive.
- This would put U.S. in position where if there is to be any further action or confrontation it would be the U.S. attacking Soviet units dedicated to Libyan defense.
- In reaction to the withdrawal of Americans from Libya:
 - Moscow would give broad propaganda play to the US evacuation, hoping both to deter the US from military action and fan Libyan apprehensions of US intentions in order to increase Tripoli's dependence on the USSR.
 - The USSR might deploy either reconnaissance aircraft or naval ships to Libya as a show of support.

DCI'S NOTES FOR NSC MEETING ON LIBYA,
Monday, 7 December 1981

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